



**State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

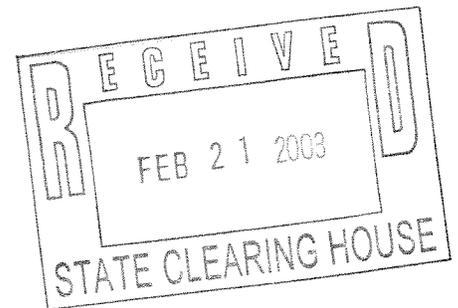
Notice of Preparation

To: State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Interested Individuals

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a programmatic Environmental Impact Report for the **Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park General Plan**

Lead Agency: California Department of Parks and Recreation
Northern Service Center
One Capitol Mall, Suite 500
Sacramento, CA 95814
Contact: Wayne Woodroof

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The California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), as the Lead Agency, will prepare a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park General Plan. We would like to know the views of interested persons, organizations, and agencies as to the scope and content of the information to be included and analyzed in the EIR. Agencies should comment on the elements of the environmental information that are relevant to their statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

The project description, location, and possible environmental effects (to the extent known) are contained in this Notice of Preparation (NOP).

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response should be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than **30 days** after issuance of this notice, which establishes the final deadline as **March 24, 2003**.

Please send your written response to Wayne Woodroof, Statewide General Plan Coordinator, California Department of Parks and Recreation, at the address shown below. Responses should include the name of a contact person at your agency.

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION CONTACT PERSON

Mr. Wayne Woodroof
Manager, Statewide General Plan Program
California Department of Parks and Recreation
Northern Service Center
One Capitol Mall, Suite 500
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A planning workshop and EIR scoping meeting has been scheduled to give the public an opportunity to comment on the scope, focus, and content of the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park General Plan and EIR. The meeting will be held from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM on March 18, 2003 at Bidwell Mansion SHP Visitor Center located at 525 The Esplanade, Chico CA 95926.

PROJECT TITLE

Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park General Plan

PROJECT LOCATION

Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park (Park) is located approximately six miles west of the City of Chico, in Butte and Glenn counties (Exhibit I). The Park consists of four discontinuous properties that are located primarily along the banks of the Sacramento River just west of the City of Chico in Northern California. At the northern end of the unit, Irvine Finch River Access is situated on the west side of the river in Glenn County; the other segments consist of Pine Creek Landing, Indian Fishery/Chico Landing, and the Big Chico Creek Riparian Area/Peterson Addition on the east side of the river in Butte County.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

DPR's General Plan Unit, in conjunction with its Northern Buttes District office, is in the process of developing a General Plan for the Park in accordance with Public Resources Code §5002.2 referencing General Plan guidelines and §21000 et seq. concerning the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The purpose of the General Plan is to guide future development activities and management objectives at the Park. Preparation of the General Plan is in its early stages, so ultimate land use and resources management provisions have not yet been determined. DPR is currently in the process of evaluating existing resources and management opportunities and constraints at the Park that will aid in the development of the General Plan.

The Park is characterized by valley oak riparian woodland and other riparian communities, and possesses substantial recreational resources and opportunities ranging from nature trails, fishing, and picnicking to boating and tubing. Known resources at the Park include:

- Sacramento River and tributaries;
- Native riparian habitat (e.g., valley oak woodland);
- Special-status species (e.g., giant garter snake, anadromous fish species, Swainson's hawk, Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle);

- Oxbow lake at Indian Fishery;
- Significant historic and prehistoric areas (e.g., Chico Landing, bridge sites, Sea Scout station, Bidwell ferry site, occupation sites);
- High-use recreational areas (e.g., Irvine Finch River Access, Pine Creek Landing, Big Chico Creek gravel bar); and
- Existing and potential acquisition areas.

Issues that will be considered as part of the General Plan process include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Protection and long-term management of sensitive natural and cultural resource areas;
- Property acquisition to form contiguous management tracts;
- Increased recreational access, including improved water and undeveloped area access (e.g., trail development, parking areas);
- Expansion of recreational facilities (e.g., environmental education camps and primitive campground areas);
- Management of river tubing activities during peak recreational periods, including public safety issues;
- Development of interpretive facilities, such as a visitor center, interpretive panels highlighting natural and cultural resources, etc.;
- Facility siting and design to avoid flooding events (e.g., relocation); and
- Improved inter-agency coordination.

POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Although ultimate land use and resources management provisions of the General Plan have not yet been determined, generally expected types of environmental impacts that may occur as a result of the General Plan can be identified. Based on the resource characteristics of the Park and generally anticipated Park uses, potential environmental effects that will likely be addressed in the EIR, include:

- Potential conflicts between sensitive wildlife species/natural communities (e.g., giant garter snake, valley oak woodland) and facility development;
- Facility development in flood-prone areas;
- Conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses resulting from facility development and/or conservation objectives;
- Potential for substantial adverse change in the significance of historic and prehistoric resources in the Park;

- Erosion/water quality impacts along the Sacramento River and its tributaries;
- Substantial alteration of the existing drainage pattern of the project area.

Recreational use levels at the Park are expected to change as a result of the General Plan. However, no significant transportation improvements and/or impacts are anticipated. If the potential to take threatened and endangered species is identified, the EIR will describe future State and Federal consultation and permit requirements that will be necessary for facility development and the types of mitigation typically expected.

INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

DPR and the Parks and Recreation Commission will use the EIR component of the General Plan to consider the environmental effects, mitigation measures, and alternatives, when reviewing the proposed General Plan for approval. The EIR will serve as the State's CEQA compliance document for adoption of the General Plan. It will also serve as the programmatic environmental document that may be referenced in implementing future actions included in the General Plan. Subsequent project-level activities identified in the General Plan will be examined in light of the program EIR to determine whether an additional environmental document must be prepared prior to project approval and implementation (State CEQA Guidelines 15168(c)). Responsible agencies may also use the EIR as needed for subsequent discretionary actions.

By: Wayne O. Woodroof

Signature: Wayne O. Woodroof

Title: Manager, Statewide General Plan Program

Date: February 21, 2003

Attachment: Regional Vicinity Map

